

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

In the specification, paragraphs have been amended on pages 6-9. No new matter is added.

Claim 2 is requested to be cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3, 5 and 10 are currently being amended. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2. Claims 3, 8 and 9 have been amended to change its dependency to claim 1. Claim 5 has been amended to delete an unnecessary reference letter. Claim 10 has been amended to delete unnecessary reference letters and numerals and to correct a clerical error.

This amendment changes and deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1 and 3-10 are now pending in this application.

Foreign priority

Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to acknowledgement applicant's claim to foreign priority.

Specification

The specification was objected to for informalities. The specification has been amended to correct the informalities, thus overcoming the objection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0124677 to Tomaru ("Tomaru"). Claims 2-3, 5-6 and 8-10

stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomaru in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,048,364 to Minamoto (“Minamoto”). Claims 4 and 7-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomaru and Minamoto in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,669,634 to Heinzman et al. (“Heinzman”). Applicant traverses these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites “an eccentric bush interposed between the rotation center axle of the bell crank lever and fixed bracket, the rotation center axle of the bell crank lever being enabled to swing with respect to the fixed bracket via the eccentric bush.” Applicant submits that the applied references do not suggest the recited arrangement of the eccentric bush in the context of the components of the steering column assembly of claim 1, where the eccentric bush is arranged to be interposed between the rotation center axle of the bell crank lever and the fixed bracket.

The Office Action recognizes that Tomaru does not disclose the arrangement of the eccentric bush as in claim 2 (now incorporated into amended independent claim 1), but supplies Minamoto for disclosing an eccentric bush. Applicant submits however, that Tomaru and Minamoto do not suggest the specifically recited arrangement of an eccentric bush as in claim 1.

Minamoto discloses a device with an eccentric disk 40 arranged between a screw nut 32 driven by a screw shaft 13 and arm 37, where the arm 37 is fixed to a left side portion 5a of a tilt bracket 5, which in turn is pivotably movably attached to fixed bracket 1 by connecting pins 6, and where a rear end of bracket 5 is secured to column 7.

Minamoto, however, does not suggest that an eccentric bush should be arranged to be interposed between a rotation center axle of a bell crank lever and a fixed bracket as arranged in Claim 1. In the Minamoto arrangement, the eccentric disk 40 is between the screw nut 32 and the arm 37. This arrangement of Minamoto merely suggests that the eccentric disk 40 should be arranged near its actuator between its rod shaped screw shaft 13 and arm 37. Even if there were motivation to combine Tomaru and Minamoto (which there is not), the modified Tomaru device would include the eccentric disk near the engagement portion 408 of the tilt

rocking member 407, between the rocking member 407 and the tip end of the rod 406, not between any rotation center axle of the rocking member 407 (equated with the recited bell crank lever) and upper attachment 401a (equated with the fixed bracket as claimed).

Moreover, the arrangement of the eccentric bush in the claim 1 assembly operates in a different fashion than that described in Minamoto. As disclosed in the present application, if the rotating center axle 24 is rotatably supported on vehicular body rearward bracket 8 without the use of an eccentric bush 26, the bell crank lever 22 when rotated attempts to revolve the tilt input axle 16 on vehicular rearward bracket 8 along an orbit Q (See FIGs. 1 through 3, and page 10) with the axial distance between rotation center axle 24 and tilt input axle 16 as a radius of curvature. However, by employing the eccentric bush 26 in the arrangement recited along with the rotation of bell crank lever 22, the rotation center axle 24 of bell crank lever 22 swings (pivots) with respect to the vehicular rearward bracket 8. Thus, it becomes possible to make the rotation orbit of the position at which tilt input axle 16 of bell crank lever 22 is supported coincident with the rotation orbit of the position at which tilt input axle 16 of jacket tube 14 is disposed. In other words, by using the eccentric bush 26, an error line P of the elongated hole 20 and an orbit Q can be eliminated (compensated for by eccentric distance α). This arrangement is not suggested by Minamoto and Tomaru. In Minamoto, the eccentric disk 40 rotates about center line 38c of pin 38 so that center line 40c of the disk 40 follows a circular arc line centered about center line 6c of the connecting pins 6 (See FIG. 7; col. 4, lines 17-22). The arrangement of the eccentric disk 40 in Minamoto does not suggest making the rotation orbit of a position at which a tilt input axle of a bell crank lever is supported coincident with the rotation orbit of the position at which tilt input axle is disposed, as results from the arrangement of claim 1.

Heinzman was cited for disclosing other features of the claims, but does not cure the deficiencies of Tomaru and Minamoto.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as independent claim 1, from which they ultimately depend, as well as for further patentable features recited therein.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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